

Application No. 10/736,654

Amendments to the Claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A melt assembly for use in a phase change printer, comprising:

a drip plate; and

a self regulating heating device thermally connected to the drip plate, wherein the heating device is a positive temperature coefficient (PTC) material).
2. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein

the drip plate has first and second surfaces,
the heating device contacts the first surface; and
the second surface is exposed to ink sticks.
3. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the heating device is located inside the drip plate.
4. (Original) The assembly of claim 3, wherein the drip plate is plastic.
5. (Original) The assembly of claim 4, wherein the heating device is injection molded into the drip plate.
6. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the drip plate is metal
7. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the drip plate is a nonferrous metal.
8. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein current only passes through one surface of the PTC material to generate heat.

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9. (Original) The assembly of claim 8, wherein the surface of the PTC material through which current is flowing is the surface contacting the second side of the drip plate.
10. (Original) The assembly of claim 9, wherein a passivation layer is situated between the conductive traces and the surface of the drip plate.
11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising a melt plate fastened to the drip plate.
12. (Original) An ink loader comprising the melt plate assembly of claim 1.
13. (Original) A drip plate for use in an ink loader for a phase change printer, wherein the drip plate comprises:
first and second drip plate surfaces;
a lower pointed portion; and
an interior space for an internal heating device
14. (Original) The drip plate of claim 13, further comprising a slot for inserting a heating device.
15. (Original) The drip plate of claim 13, wherein the drip plate is made from plastic.
16. (Original) The drip plate of claim 15, wherein the drip plate is injection molded.
17. (Original) The drip plate of claim 16, wherein a heating device is injection molded into the drip plate.

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18. (Original) The drip plate of claim 17, wherein the heating device is a PTC heating device.

19. (Original) The drip plate of claim 13, wherein the drip plate contains at least one hole through which ink can travel.

20. (Original) An ink loader for use in a phase change ink printer, comprising:
at least one channel having an entry end and an exit end; and
a melt assembly, which includes
a non metallic, non ceramic drip plate with first and second sides, wherein the lower
portion of the plate is shaped to form a drip point.